

Interim Assessments: Overview & Frequently Asked Questions



R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)

This guide provides an overview and FAQs for the interim assessments being developed through Race to the Top funding.

In general, what are interim assessments?

- ◆ **Interim Assessments** are assessments administered during instruction that are designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of goals to inform decisions in the classroom and beyond. They fall between summative and formative assessments—they are administered periodically during an interval of instruction, oftentimes after the end of a unit or multiple times throughout a course.

What do the Rhode Island Interim Assessments include?

- ◆ **Fixed Form Assessments:** These assessments are meant to provide rich information for groups of students. They will assess student progress on understanding the Common Core material on three occasions throughout the year. These will likely be administered in November, February, and April.
- ◆ **Test Construction Tool:** This tool will allow educators to create various tests, quizzes, or exercises using items written to the Common Core State Standards for Math and ELA and the forthcoming Science and Social Studies Standards. Within the test construction tool the user will be able to select the content area, grade, and standards to assess and the tool would populate the test form with items through a guided process. Users will be able to save assessments for later use.

What content will be included? What about accommodations for access by students with disabilities?

- ◆ All assessments will initially assess mathematics and English language arts content in grades 3-11 and science and social studies in the future.
- ◆ Content in English language arts and mathematics will be developed using the Common Core State Standards.
- ◆ All of the assessments will include an array of accommodations to allow for access by students, and will be available online and paper-based.

How are the tests scored?

- ◆ Multiple-choice items will be machine-scored, while constructed-response items will be teacher-scored.¹
- ◆ Paper tests must be scanned and uploaded into the system in order for the multi-choice items to be machine-scored, as well as to access student responses at a later date.²
- ◆ Distributed scoring will also be available through the online system, which will allow educators to share scoring responsibilities through anonymous scoring of test items (During the 2012-13 school year this will only be available for the test construction tool).

How will educators be trained?

- ◆ Educators will receive training on how to use the system, as well as on best scoring practices and data interpretation. The training will be a train-the-trainer model. Trainers will initially receive training delivered over

¹ Note: In the first year (SY2012-13) of the fixed form assessments, the vendor will professionally score all of the constructed-response items. In Year 2 (SY2013-14) local scoring by teachers will be required for the constructed-response items.

² Fixed form assessments taken on paper will be mailed (at no cost) to the vendor who will then scan and score the tests in Year 1 (SY2012-13), but will need to be scanned locally in Year 2 (SY2013-14).

two ½ day sessions—one in the fall for the fixed form assessments, one in the winter for the test creation tool.

Trainers will then train educators on using the system. Training support materials will be available electronically.

- ◆ Online and in-person training sessions will also be available on best scoring practices, data interpretation, etc.

How will the interim assessments support districts and schools?

- ◆ The Interim Assessments will enable districts, schools, and teachers to use and create locally managed interim assessments that assess the latest standards. These assessments will be a valuable tool to help teachers pinpoint areas of curriculum for which students need additional or adjusted instruction.
- ◆ The Rhode Island interim assessments, which will be delivered primarily online, will provide rapid turnaround of student results, so that instruction can be adjusted in real time—a benefit not offered by large-scale, statewide assessments.
- ◆ The primary purpose of the interim assessments is for instructional planning and monitoring purposes.

What type of information will the Fixed Form Interim Assessments provide? Will they provide similar information to Response-to-Intervention (RTI) or other diagnostic assessments?

- ◆ The fixed form assessments will provide information pertaining to students' understanding of grade-level (or content area) material from the Common Core State Standards. Over the course of the year educators will be able to monitor student progress in understanding this new and challenging material. Although initial score reports will be basic in the first year, more comprehensive reports will be provided in future years. Reports will include item analysis opportunities, the item text, the student response, and individual student reports, as well as summary class reports.
- ◆ The Interim Assessments are not designed as diagnostic assessments. They are also not intended to monitor the learning rate and level of performance of struggling learners, which the RTI assessments provide. Instead, the Interim Assessments will provide a broad indication of what CCSS material students may be struggling with and need further instruction around.

How are the assessments being developed?

- ◆ RIDE is working with Measured Progress, the vendor of the NECAP, to develop the assessments. Over the past few months we have been engaged in item development using the CCSS and PARCC assessment frameworks.
- ◆ Similar to the NECAP, items are reviewed by RIDE content specialists and item review committees, which are comprised of Rhode Island educators, to ensure that the items are appropriate and free of bias.

When can districts/LEAs begin implementing the interim assessments? What are the options for implementation?

- ◆ The interim assessments will be offered on a staggered timeline beginning with the release of the fixed form assessments in November 2012 for math and ELA.
- ◆ The test construction tool will be offered shortly after, in January 2013.

How can I stay informed about new developments?

- ◆ Updates, new information, and this brochure are posted on the RIDE web site at www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/Interim.aspx
- ◆ Check out the Commissioner's Weekly Field Memos, posted online at www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx.

This brochure can be downloaded from www.ride.ri.gov/Division-EEIE/docs/RTTT/Interim_Assessment.pdf